

VA**U.S. Department
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News Release

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Washington, D.C. -- The Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced plans to establish two additional Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Centers (GRECCs), bringing to 18 the total number of such centers around the country.

Selected from among eight proposals, the new GRECCs will be located at VA Medical Centers in Pittsburgh, Pa., and Cleveland, Ohio.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Togo D. West Jr. said, "The GRECC program is widely recognized as a national resource for preparing physicians and other health-care professionals to work with the problems of aging. Establishing these new centers will broaden our research and education on the aging process so that we can provide even better medical care for the aging veteran population."

Each GRECC has a general program of research and education in the field of geriatrics and gerontology, as well as an area of special focus. The new Pittsburgh GRECC will focus on strokes in the elderly, while the new Cleveland GRECC's focus will be on cardiovascular diseases in the elderly.

During the last two decades, VA researchers and clinicians have been in the forefront of the developing fields of gerontology and geriatrics. GRECCs are centers of excellence designed to increase the scientific knowledge of the aging process, share that knowledge with health-care providers and trainees and improve the overall quality of care for the elderly patient population.

"This is one of the several ways that the veterans' health-care system not only benefits veterans, but also helps all Americans -- indeed, people everywhere," VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Kenneth W. Kizer added.

The nearly nine million veterans age 65 and older now represent 34.8 percent of the veteran population. This percentage will rise significantly in the next several years and peak at 46 percent in the year 2016.